

# **Field Testing Protocol**

## **Western Mountains, Valleys and Coast Regional Supplement**

### **Organization of field testing teams:**

District Offices of the Corps of Engineers in the Western Mountains, Valleys and Coast Region (see the list of District coordinators at the end of this document) will coordinate and oversee the field testing of the draft Regional Supplement. Field testing will be done in cooperation with regional NRCS, EPA, FWS, and other interested federal and state agencies and universities.

Field teams will consist of available interagency experts, with the constraint that each team must include an experienced botanist and a soil scientist to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the basic data.

If needed, the District coordinator will provide team members with an introduction to the Regional Supplement and will explain any new or unfamiliar indicators as necessary to avoid confusion over interpretation of the indicators.

### **Site Selection:**

Testing teams should focus on areas where permitting activity is high. There is no need to sample remote areas unless convenient opportunities arise.

Sample a number of typical wetland sites in each District or subregion, plus a selection of available “problem” situations. Problem situations should include, if possible, areas with unusual plant communities or soil types that may lack indicators, requiring use of Chapter 5 (Difficult Wetland Situations in the Western Mountains, Valleys and Coast Region) to make the wetland determination.

### **Approach:**

The basic testing approach is to document at least 2 sampling points at each field site, one point in the wetland and one point in the adjacent upland, and determine the location of the wetland boundary between them. The team should collaborate to make the determination and documentation as accurate as possible. Follow these general steps:

1. Document each sampling point based on existing practice (i.e., 1987 Manual with existing guidance memos and existing local interpretation). For each point, completely fill out the old (1992) wetland determination data form. Locate the wetland boundary based on current practice.

2. Document each point using the new (Regional Supplement) data form. Locate the wetland boundary based on indicators and guidance given in the Regional Supplement.
3. If the two wetland boundaries are different, measure the distance between them.
4. Fill out the attached questionnaire (one copy per field site) to help explain any differences seen in the two methods.
5. For each field site sampled, submit the following items to the appropriate District coordinator:
  - a. Completed 1992 and Regional Supplement data forms for each sampling point
  - b. Sketch map of the site with sampling points, wetland boundaries, and any other important features indicated
  - c. One copy of the Field Evaluation Questionnaire
  - d. Optional brief report as necessary to explain test results

**List of Western Mountains, Valleys and Coast Region Corps District coordinators:**

Michael Finan, Sacramento District, 916-557-5324

Jim Goudzwaard, Portland District, 503-808-4376

Bruce Henderson, Los Angeles District, 805-585-2145

Dan Martel, San Francisco District, 415-977-8435

Greg Martinez, Walla Walla District, 208-345-2154

Chandler Peter, Omaha District, Wyoming Regulatory Office, Cheyenne, 307-772-2300

Kristina Tong, Seattle District, 206-764-6913

Van Truan, Albuquerque District, Colorado Regulatory Office, Pueblo, 719-543-6915

## WETLAND DELINEATION FIELD EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

This questionnaire should be completed for each boundary delineation performed. The assumption is that two communities were evaluated, one wetland (= "lower community") and one upland (= "upper community") so that a boundary between them could be identified. Fill in the blanks or check spaces as appropriate. Attach copies of the completed field data forms.

Site Name or Location \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Evaluator(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Affiliation(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### General Site Characteristics

Is the site \_\_\_typical or \_\_\_problematic? *If problematic, explain:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

#### Wetland (lower community)

Ecological System: \_\_\_Saline Tidal \_\_\_Fresh Tidal \_\_\_Fresh Nontidal \_\_\_Saline Nontidal  
Wetland Type: \_\_\_Forested \_\_\_Shrub \_\_\_Emergent \_\_\_Moss/Lichen \_\_\_Farmed (hay or crop)  
\_\_\_Other (specify: \_\_\_\_\_)  
HGM Class: \_\_\_Depression \_\_\_Riverine \_\_\_Fringe \_\_\_Slope \_\_\_Flat  
Vegetative Cover: \_\_\_Dense \_\_\_Evenly Mixed w/Nonvegetated \_\_\_Sparse

#### Nonwetland (upper community)

Habitat Type: \_\_\_Forest \_\_\_Shrub \_\_\_Meadow/Prairie \_\_\_Moss/Lichen \_\_\_Farmed  
\_\_\_Other (specify: \_\_\_\_\_)

1. Was there a marked difference in the two plant communities? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No
2. Was there a gradual change in vegetation between the two communities creating a significant "transition zone" between? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No. If so, how wide was this transition zone? \_\_\_\_\_feet
3. Was there an abrupt topographic change between the two communities? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No

### Boundary Determination

*Compare results from the two methods: (1) current practice using the 1987 Manual and guidance memos, and (2) 1987 Manual with the draft Regional Supplement.*

1. The wetland boundary was: \_\_\_the same or \_\_\_different.
2. If different, which method produced the boundary higher on the landscape?  
\_\_\_Manual with current guidance or \_\_\_Manual with Regional Supplement
3. What was the linear distance between the two boundaries? \_\_\_\_\_feet
4. What type of indicator(s) were responsible for the difference in the boundaries?  
\_\_\_Hydrophytic vegetation \_\_\_Hydric soil \_\_\_Wetland hydrology (*check all that apply*)

## Assessment of the Indicators

### Hydrophytic Vegetation

1. Did the lower community pass the current basic test for hydrophytic vegetation (i.e., >50% of the dominants had an indicator status of FAC or wetter, *excluding FAC-*)? ☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Did the lower community pass the “dominance test” in the Regional Supplement (i.e., >50% of the dominants were FAC or wetter, *counting FAC- as FAC*)? ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. What other indicators of hydrophytic vegetation were observed in the lower community?
  - a) List those from the Manual with current guidance: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - b) List those from the Regional Supplement: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Was the vegetation in the lower community a problematic wetland community type?  
☐ Yes ☐ No. *If so, briefly describe and explain how the problem was handled* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. Did the upper community pass the current basic test for hydrophytic vegetation (i.e., >50% of the dominants had an indicator status of FAC or wetter, *excluding FAC-*)? ☐ Yes ☐ No
6. Did the upper community pass the “dominance test” in the Regional Supplement (i.e., >50% of the dominants were FAC or wetter, *counting FAC- as FAC*)? ☐ Yes ☐ No
7. What other indicators of hydrophytic vegetation were observed in the upper community?
  - a) List those from the Manual with current guidance: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - b) List those from the Regional Supplement: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. Did both methods reach the same conclusion regarding the presence of hydrophytic vegetation for the upper community? ☐ Yes ☐ No. *If not, briefly explain* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. Were the hydrophytic vegetation indicators in the Regional Supplement clearly described and easy to apply? ☐ Yes ☐ No. *If not, briefly explain* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Hydric Soil

1. Did both methods find indicators of hydric soil in the lower community? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No
  - a) List those from the Manual with current guidance: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - b) List those from the Regional Supplement: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Did the lower community contain a problematic hydric soil (i.e., one that lacked indicators)? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No. *If so, briefly describe the problem and explain how it was handled:* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Did both methods reach the same conclusion regarding the presence of hydric soil in the upper community? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No. *If not, briefly explain* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - a) List indicators from the Manual with current guidance: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - b) List indicators from the Regional Supplement: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. Were the hydric soil indicators in the Regional Supplement clearly described and easy to apply? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No. *If not, briefly explain* \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### Wetland Hydrology

1. Did both methods determine that wetland hydrology was present in the lower community? (Requires 1 primary indicator or 2 secondary indicators.) \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No
  - a) List indicators from the Manual with current guidance:  
Primary: \_\_\_\_\_ Secondary: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
  - b) List indicators from the Regional Supplement:  
Primary: \_\_\_\_\_ Secondary: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

2. Did the lower community contain a problematic wetland hydrology situation (i.e., one that lacked indicators)?

\_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No. *If so, briefly describe the problem and explain how it was handled:* \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Did both methods reach the same conclusion regarding wetland hydrology for the upper community? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No. *If not, briefly explain*\_\_\_\_\_

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a) List indicators from the Manual with current guidance:

Primary:\_\_\_\_\_ Secondary:\_\_\_\_\_

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b) List indicators from the Regional Supplement:

Primary:\_\_\_\_\_ Secondary:\_\_\_\_\_

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4. Were the wetland hydrology indicators in the Regional Supplement clearly described and easy to apply? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No. *If not, briefly explain*\_\_\_\_\_

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### **Comments on the Regional Supplement**

1. Were the indicators and procedures in the Supplement clear and easy to apply?

\_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No. *If not, how could they be improved?*\_\_\_\_\_

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2. In your opinion, did the Regional Supplement make this wetland determination more defensible? \_\_\_Yes \_\_\_No. *Briefly explain*\_\_\_\_\_

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3. Based on your testing, do you want to recommend other indicators that should be considered for further evaluation? ☐ Yes ☐ No. *List by indicator type:* \_\_\_\_\_

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4. Was the Regional Supplement's field data form complete, understandable, and easy to fill out? ☐ Yes ☐ No. *If not, how could it be improved?* \_\_\_\_\_

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5. Any additional comments or suggestions? \_\_\_\_\_

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